



**CITY OF EASTHAMPTON**  
**OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

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CABLE TELEV

2006

CABLE TELEVISION DIVISION

September 7, 2006

Ms. Andrea Nixon  
Clerk, Cable Television Division  
Dept. of Telecommunications & Energy  
One South Station  
Boston, MA 02111

Dear Ms. Nixon:

The City of Easthampton, Massachusetts would like to register its strong opposition to Verizon's March 16, 2006, rulemaking petition filed with the Cable Division of the Department of Telecommunications and Energy. Verizon's petition proposes extremely unreasonable new rules for initial cable licensing.

The proposed rules would require a municipality to hold a public hearing on an initial cable television license application within 60 days of the application filing. It would require only 30 days from the time of the public hearing for the municipality to approve or disapprove the application, and issue the actual license in case of approval.

As most local officials will tell you, it is impossible to conclude a proper initial license application, review, negotiation, license drafting and issuance within 30 days of the public hearing. Such an initial licensing time frame would be difficult in the best of circumstances, and is particularly difficult in light of the many questions and complex issues raised by the non-standard terms and conditions commonly reported to be included in Verizon-proposed cable licenses.


As you know from RCN's initial licensing experience, cable operators willing to negotiate customary and standard cable licenses enjoy reasonable and fast municipal licensing. The existing license timetables have worked well for decades. They should not be changed at the request of a single proponent. Note that Congress considered and provided for a three-year renewal process when it set forth cable licensing rules in the 1984 Cable Act. This framework worked well for decades and there is no rational basis for casting aside the time tested licensing rules and replacing them with radically abbreviated rules.

Municipal officials who are responsible for implementing licensing and who are accountable to the public are in opposition to these proposed rules. We believe that under the proposed rules, our community and cities and towns across the state will be boxed into an unreasonable 30 day post-hearing licensing process. We will lose the ability to properly review and negotiate Verizon cable proposals. This is not even close to what is needed for a fair and reasonable licensing process.

The Massachusetts Cable Division should reject the Verizon petition and allow local officials to continue serving their constituents as they have been doing for decades.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any further questions or desire further comment, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Joy E. Winnie

President

Easthampton City Council